



Ebola

What is Ebola?

Ebola is one of the diseases known as viral hemorrhagic fevers. These diseases are caused by viruses that lead to high fevers and, in some cases, severe bleeding (hemorrhage). The disease caused by the Ebola virus is particularly dangerous, with a death rate of 50-90 percent.

Ebola is an animal disease that humans get through close contact with the blood, fluids or organs of infected animals. The disease can then be passed from person to person. Ebola outbreaks occur primarily in Central and West Africa.

What are the symptoms of Ebola?

Symptoms include fever, headache, body aches, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain and sometimes abnormal bleeding. Symptoms start from two to 21 days after a person comes in contact with the Ebola virus.

How is Ebola spread?

- Ebola is almost always spread through direct contact with the blood, body fluids or excretions of a person sick with Ebola; through objects such as needles contaminated with their infected body fluids; or through direct contact with the body of a victim of Ebola.
- Ebola cannot be spread by an infected person before they have symptoms of the illness.
- It is possible for those who recover from Ebola to infect others as long as their blood or other body fluids contain the Ebola virus. Blood and fluids can remain infected for several weeks.
- Ebola is not spread through casual contact.
- Ebola is not spread through water, or food grown in the United States.
- There is no strong evidence Ebola is transmitted through the air.
- Gloves, face masks, eye protection and protective gowns can prevent the spread of Ebola from a patient to a caregiver.

Who is at risk for Ebola?

- For most people, the risk of catching Ebola is extremely low.
- People who care for Ebola patients are at the highest risk because they may come into contact with blood or body fluids.
- People who come into contact with the bodies of Ebola victims are also at risk and should take protective measures to avoid possible infection.

How is Ebola treated?

- Ebola patients are given fluids and lost blood is replaced.
- There is no licensed medication that cures Ebola and no vaccine to prevent it. Several experimental medications are currently being evaluated.
- Ebola patients are isolated to prevent the spread of the disease. Those who come into contact with patients or the bodies of deceased Ebola victims should wear protective clothing, wash their hands often and take other measures to avoid infection.

Is it safe to travel to affected areas?

The risk is small but it is recommended you don't travel to a country that is experiencing an Ebola outbreak.

If you must travel

If you absolutely must travel to a country experiencing an Ebola outbreak:

- Take protective measures to avoid all travel-related infections.
- Talk with your doctor or a travel medicine clinic if you are planning a trip to areas where outbreaks are occurring.
- Check the CDC's Travelers' Health website for travel notices on specific diseases and countries: see wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices.

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After you travel

If you or anyone in your travel group gets a fever, headache, or joint and muscle aches within three weeks of returning from your trip:

- Call your healthcare provider right away. Tell them your symptoms and that you travelled to an affected area. They will let you know if you need to come in.
- Tell your doctor what activities you were involved in and if you had contact with anyone who had Ebola.



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